

EXPRESSWAYS

VIDEO TRANSCRIPT • Winter 2013

Expressways Video Newsletter

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Courtney Heidelberg: Welcome to Expressways produced by the Florida Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles.

In this edition... We'll talk to state troopers fresh out of the Florida Highway Patrol academy.

We'll hear from the Trooper of the Year.

We'll learn how an FHP-trained canine helped locate a missing child.

We'll learn about registering your Emergency Contact Information.

And we'll update you on the redesign efforts for the new Florida license plate.

But first, a message from Executive Director Julie Jones.

Julie L. Jones, DHSMV Executive Director: Thank you. I've spent the majority of my career in law enforcement and am proud to serve with the men and women of the Florida Highway Patrol as part of the agency. I hope you enjoy the FHP graduation story and the other achievements of our members highlighted in this edition of Expressways.

Courtney Heidelberg: In 2012, FHP put 115 new troopers on the roads in your communities, and two classes of recruits are on schedule to graduate from the academy this year. Recruits complete a extensive training program to prepare them for a career as a Florida State Trooper. Here's what a few of the new troopers had to say after earning their FHP badges.

Trooper Aaron Nixon, Troop C, Pinellas County, New Trooper: I've always wanted to help others, I've always wanted to be part of something larger than myself, and as I was looking around the state, there were a lot of opportunities but only one department that really met everything I was looking for. It says so on our motto: courtesy, service and protection. It's going to give me an opportunity to get out there, be places, meet people, help and just really make a difference.

Grettel Monge, Troop F, Manatee County, New Trooper: Well, I've always liked law enforcement and always saw the state of Florida state troopers as very tough people, and I was very excited to join them. And one day I said I was going to be there, and here I am!

Courtney Heidelberg: Congratulations to all the new troopers!

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Courtney Heidelberg: Sgt. Mary Godino is FHP's Trooper of the Year for 2012. She was honored by the Governor and Cabinet members. Sgt. Godino has been with the Patrol for 17 years, and her quick actions helped save a man's life.

Sgt. Mary Godino, Florida Highway Patrol: I was travelling north on 301 in Pasco County on my way into work, and a tanker truck had overturned in front of me. The driver was entrapped in the vehicle, and I had performed first aid until the EMS personnel got there. He was heavily entrapped, and I held pressure on the bleeding on his head and I kept his airway open until EMS could do the necessities to extricate him.

Interviewer: How long were you there before EMS arrived, or how long did you stay with him?

Godino: Well I was on the scene instantly; it felt like forever. I'm not sure, maybe 45 minutes, an hour, somewhere in that range.

Pam Bondi, Florida Attorney General: Mary, couldn't that truck have exploded? And she said, 'Yeah, but that's not what you think of when you put on that uniform every day. You think of the people you are saving and the people you are helping.' And thanks to her truly heroic actions she saved a life of one of our fellow citizens."

Courtney Heidelberg: The Florida Petroleum Council developed the Trooper of the Year program more than 40 years ago to recognize troopers who go above and beyond the call of duty.

Courtney Heidelberg: Missing Children's Day is held every year at the state Capitol to raise awareness of missing children and to educate the public on child safety and abduction prevention. FHP is honored to serve as escorts for the event every year, which also recognizes those who have made outstanding contributions. The 2012 canine team award winner was Canine Officer Sgt. Ronald Mitchell of the Wakulla County Sheriff's Office and his partner, Gunny, who was trained by FHP's own Trooper Michael Van Leer.

Sgt. Ronald Mitchell, Wakulla County Sheriff's Office: I had a four-year-old child that got away from the family in a wooded area, and we were able to recover the child without injury or harm.

Courtney Heidelberg: Trooper Van Leer, who spearheads FHP's canine training program spent hundreds of hours training Gunny. He has trained dozens of canines for other law enforcement agencies, in addition to FHP's canines.

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Courtney Heidelberg: Florida officials recognize the first week of October as Register Your Emergency Contact Information Week. A resolution, signed by the Governor and Cabinet members, designated the week and encouraged Floridians to enter their contacts in the database. Christine Olson joined state officials at the state Capitol to recognize the resolution. We talked to Christine to find out why the program is so important to her.

Christine Olson, To Inform Families First: Well, it's important to me because I personally went through the national average time of six hours before notification. This was in Dec. 7, 2005, when my daughter Tiffany was killed in a motorcycle crash in Palmetto, Fl. Her accident happened at 7:01 p.m. At 11 o'clock our local newspaper had the story in print, and I did not get the information until 1:30 in the morning, six and a half hours later.

Courtney Heidelberg: More than 6 million Floridians have now registered their emergency contact information. That's more than one out of every three license and ID cardholders. Registration is easy! Visit our website at flhsmv.gov or your local driver license office to enter up to two contacts who you want police to notify if you're in a crash.

Courtney Heidelberg: For three weeks at the end of the year, Floridians had an opportunity to help choose their favorite new design for the basic Florida license plate through an online vote. The department wants to upgrade the basic plate to increase readability and add a seven-character configuration. When all the votes were tallied, this plate was the most popular out of the four finalists. The Web poll represents one part of the process to select the new plate design. A manufacturer must be selected and the Governor, Cabinet and policy makers will weigh in.

Courtney Heidelberg: Thanks for watching Expressways. Drive safely and buckle up!

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